

ETIQUETTE FOR LADIES;

A MANUAL OF THE MOST

APPROVED RULES OF CONDUCT

IN

Polished Society,

FOR

MARRIED AND UNMARRIED LADIES.

COMPILED FROM THE LATEST AUTHORITY.

BY A LADY OF NEW YORK.

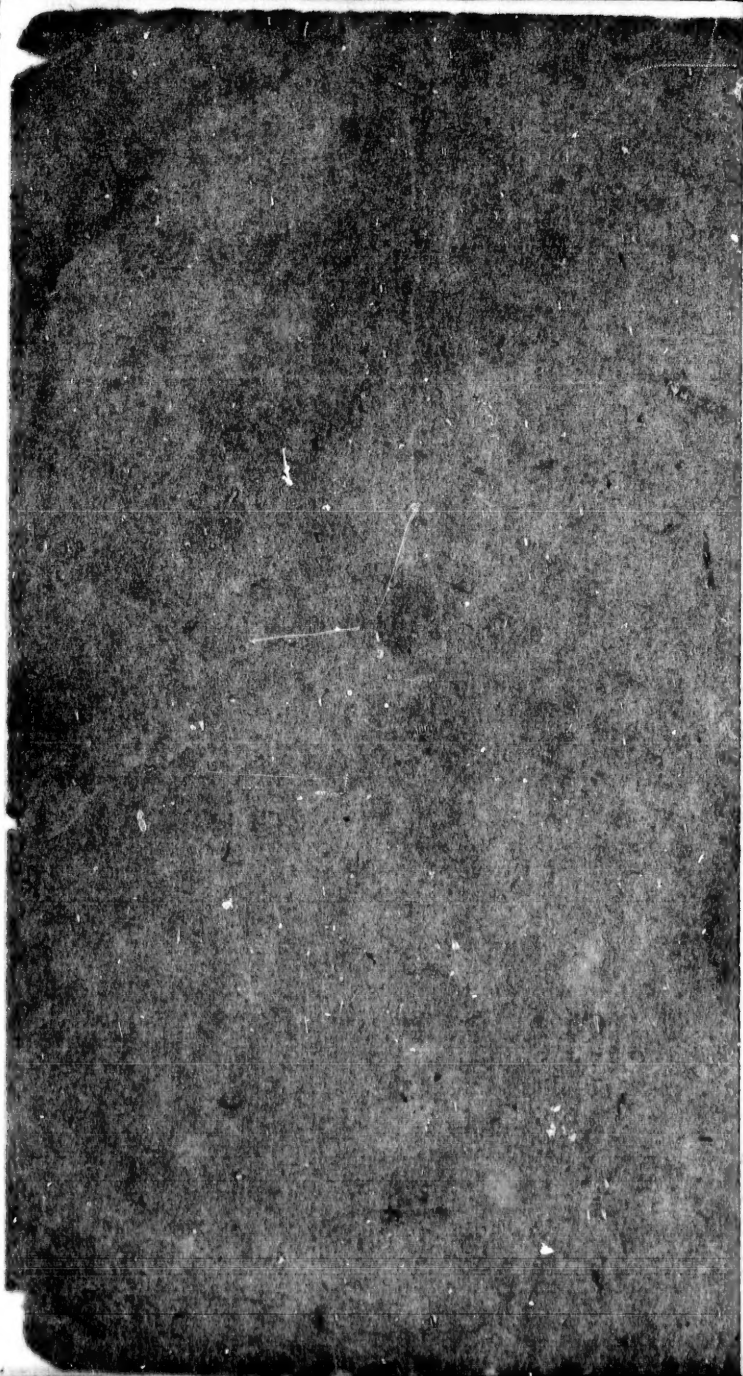
There is no personification of a more kind, than the appearance
of a woman who is well educated. — Miss F. K.

Philadelphia:

G. B. ZIEGLER & CO.

1845.

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In Polished Society,

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There is no greater sign of a little mind, than the
affectation of despising little duties.—Mrs. BRAY.



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of New-York.

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P R E F A C E.

A complete knowledge of the laws of etiquette, is indispensable to every lady who desires to preserve her own dignity in mingling with the world, and who hopes to command the respect due to her sex. An eloquent writer on the necessity of these laws, says, that "as man is a social being, that science must be an important one, which teaches him how to conduct himself in society."

A woman may have many excellent qualities—her heart may be full of kindness, and her mind richly stored with knowledge—yet, unless she is acquainted with the despotic little laws imposed by society, these will not preserve her from ridicule, or teach her how to avoid wounding her best friends, by an act which they may consider slighting.

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trict of the State

The one great rule, which should govern all her actions, should be "*courtesy to all.*" The high and the low—the tradesman and the domestic, as well as our equals and superiors, have all a claim to courtesy—especially, to courtesy from a woman. By that courtesy, she will win affection and esteem, more rapidly, and more certainly, than by her talents, wit, or learning. She gains respect by bestowing it, and shows her own superiority, by assuming none. Courtesy is generally a gainer, but never a loser.

The laws of etiquette have been classed and explained in the following pages, and every lady who does not wholly disregard the ordinary courtesies of life, will find this little volume a valuable drawing room companion.



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STUDY

CHAPTER I

SECTION I

The first part of the study is devoted to a general survey of the subject. It is divided into three main sections. The first section deals with the history of the subject, the second with its present state, and the third with its future prospects. The second part of the study is devoted to a detailed examination of the subject. It is divided into two main sections. The first section deals with the theory of the subject, and the second with its practical applications. The third part of the study is devoted to a critical examination of the subject. It is divided into two main sections. The first section deals with the strengths and weaknesses of the subject, and the second with its social and economic implications.

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ETIQUETTE

FOR LADIES.

CHAPTER I.

TRUE POLITENESS.

TRUE Politeness is the offspring of good-breeding and good-nature. Persons may be *ceremonious*, but they cannot be really *polite* without retaining some kindly feeling towards their neighbours—without being willing to overlook the faults, and to search out the virtues of their fellow creatures.

The manners of a man may lose their grace and refinement by too close application to business, or to literary pursuits, but want of polish in a lady is inexcusable. It is essentially her province to please, and politeness has been termed the “art of pleasing.”

To be courteous, she should accommodate her feelings to the feelings of those with

whom she is associating. She may differ from them in opinion, but always with an air which says that her own opinion is not, of course, infallible.

Pope says that "true politeness consists in being easy oneself, and making everybody about one as easy as one can."

Byron expressed an equally correct sentiment when he said of married women—

"They know the world and are at ease,
And being natural, naturally please."

The principal rules of politeness are:—
To subdue the temper.

To submit to the weaknesses of our fellow-men.

And to render to all their due, freely and courteously.

To do this effectually it requires—judgment to recommend ourselves to those whom we may meet in society, and discrimination to know when and to whom to yield, as well as discretion to treat all with the deference due to their reputation, their station, or their merit.

Sincerity is another essential characteristic of courtesy. It is the want of this which makes society what it is said to be, artificial.

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sists in being easy, but not indifferent; good-humoured, but not familiar; passive, but not unconcerned. It includes, also, a sensibility, nice, yet correct,—a tact, delicate, yet true. There is a golden mean in the art which it should be every one's object to attain, without descending to obsequiousness on the one hand, or to familiarity on the other.

A failing in conduct or an infirmity in temper, is more easily excused in society than any deficiency in politeness.

Arrogance is one of the greatest obstacles to courtesy. Pride is highly culpable either in male or female.

A kind word, or a gracious smile, will secure that good-will, which a haughty demeanour, or a high look, may forfeit for ever.

The really courteous woman has a thorough knowledge of human nature, and can make allowance for its failings. She is always consistent with herself. The polite alone know how to make others polite; as the good know how to inspire others with a relish for virtue.

When a lady uses too much ceremony she violates one of the principal rules of politeness, for she does not make her guests feel at ease.

The most polite etiquette does not oblige

you to observe all the finical rules of politeness, where they are certain to be neither understood nor appreciated.

There cannot be greater rudeness than displaying any of the real polish of conventional rules, amongst those who are so ill-acquainted with them as to appear more ignorant than yourself.

Whoever at home or abroad talks much about what is genteel or fashionable, or what is the reverse, shows that she is herself unacquainted with true good breeding. The term *genteel* is only found in the mouths of those who have it nowhere else.

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCTIONS.

As a general rule, do not introduce a gentleman to a lady without first privately asking her permission.

In going through the ceremony of introducing pronounce the name of the lady first, adding, "permit me to present to you Mr. —"

In introducing two gentlemen, present the younger one to the elder, or the one of lower rank to the one of higher. If the gentlemen are about the same age, and equals in society, present the stranger to the one with whom you are most intimate. The best form of expression that can be used in introducing two gentlemen, who are in the same circle, is to say, "Mr. —, let me make you acquainted with Mr. —." But if you are addressing an elderly gentleman always say, "Mr. — permit me to present to you Mr. —."

A lady should always be perfectly at her ease while introducing her friends to one another, as she has, while performing this necessary little ceremony, great opportunity of proving whether or not her manners are truly graceful.

It is not considered fashionable to introduce two persons who accidentally meet in your parlour, and who are paying you a morning visit. The object of this custom in France, (where it first arose,) was to prevent formality, as visitors were expected to converse together without an introduction, and were afterwards at liberty to recognise each other or not just as they pleased. It is therefore in good taste, if you find your guests do not converse together with-

out an introduction, to present them to one another.

Never introduce in the street, unless the third person joins and walks with you. You may make an exception to this rule when the parties are mutually desirous of knowing one another. If you are walking with one lady do not stop to converse with others who are unknown to her, as she must necessarily feel unpleasant. If you are walking with a gentleman you may follow the bent of your inclination, for if he is well bred he will attend your pleasure without evincing either impatience or awkwardness.

A lady is at liberty to take either another lady or a gentleman to pay a morning visit to a friend, without asking permission; but she should never allow a gentleman the same liberty; if he desires to make any of his friends known to her, he must first ask if the acquaintance would be agreeable.

A lady who is invited to an evening assembly may always request a gentleman who has not been invited by the lady of the house, to accompany her.

Acquaintances made in travelling, or accidentally in public places, have no claim to more than a passing bow if you afterwards find that the acquaintanceship is not particularly desirable.

When a gentleman is presented to a lady, if she is in her own house and desires to welcome him, she may shake hands with him: but on any other occasion, unless the gentleman is venerable, or the bosom friend of the husband or father, this practice is reprehensible.

The same rule should be observed when a lady is introduced to a lady, although in this country the habit of shaking hands is very general.

In introducing a friend, be as cautious of saying too much in his favour as too little, for if the introduced be really the possessor of very good qualities, they will soon be found out, and more appreciated than if they had in the first instance been all told.

At a large dinner or evening party, although some persons strictly adhere to the French custom of not introducing, the mistress of the house shows real politeness by presenting to one another those persons whom she thinks will assimilate in their dispositions. If there are strangers present, a party in America is apt to become formal through the omission of introductions; not so in Paris, where everybody converses with his neighbour without going through the unnecessary ceremony of a presentation.

CHAPTER III.

INTRODUCTORY LETTERS.

A LETTER of Introduction should be enclosed in an envelope, and left unsealed.

Letters of Introduction should only be addressed to persons upon whom you have some claim for civility, or to whom the acquaintance of the friend you introduce must necessarily be agreeable.

The card and address of the person for whom the introduction is intended should be enclosed within the letter. The letter will be acknowledged in the course of three days, either by a visit or an invitation. If no answer is received, you may infer that the person who gave the letter had no right to do so.



CHAPTER IV.

NOTES AND CARDS OF INVITATION.

INVITATIONS should be sent in the name of the lady of the house.

The usual form is simply "Mrs. — requests the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. —'s company on - - - - -." The evening, the date of that evening, and if the party is *small* the hour, are then inserted.

If the daughters and sons of the family are invited, a separate note is sent to the Misses — and another to the Messieurs —.

The answer should be "Mr. and Mrs. — accept with pleasure Mrs. —'s invitation for Thursday evening next;" (or whatever evening it may be;) the date of the day in which the answer is written is placed on the left hand, at the bottom of the note.

If a refusal is sent it should be expressed as follows: "Mr. and Mrs. — regret that it will not be in their power to accept Mrs. —'s invitation for Thursday evening next," the date as before.

Replies or invitations couched in unusual

forms of speech, (unless the party is a very small and sociable one) denote a want of breeding.

A note of invitation or a reply is always enclosed in an envelope.

Sealing wax should be of fancy colours, or if a wafer is used, it must be a transparent one, designed for ladies' notes.

If a lady invites another lady whom she has never visited, she encloses her card.

Invitations should be answered within two days. If you send an acceptance, and, when the appointed day arrives, are unable to attend, be sure to despatch an excuse before evening.

Printed cards are issued when the ball is large. For a fancy ball the invitations are sent out three weeks beforehand. For a large ball ten or seven days—for smaller ones five days, and for parties three and two days.

Never invite only one day before your party takes place, unless you give the invitation in person.

For invitations, use finely glazed and gilt edged paper, perfectly unadorned unless with the stamp of your crest or initials.

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CHAPTER V.

VISITING.

"If a lady," says Mrs. Parks, "be engaged with light needlework when visitors enter, it promotes ease and is not inconsistent with good breeding to continue her employment during conversation; particularly if the visit be protracted, or the visitors be gentlemen."

It is generally in bad taste to greet her female friends with a kiss, when there are gentlemen present with whom she is not very intimate. There are of course many occasions when this rule may be deviated from. Of these the lady must herself be the judge.

Unless her guests are advanced in years she should not accompany them to the door. If she is living in style she will ring the bell, when they take leave, for a servant to attend them.

When you enter a drawing room where there is a ball or a party, if possible salute the lady of the house before speaking to anybody else. Even your most intimate

Maria

friends are to appear invisible until you have made your courtesy to your entertainer.

In Paris it is customary for a lady to enter a ball-room without taking the arm of the gentleman by whom she is attended—she also crosses the room at pleasure without any assistance—this custom is sometimes adopted in the higher circles in England and America, and promotes ease.

When you leave a room before the others, go without speaking to any one, if possible, unseen.

In company, though none are "free," yet all are "equal." All therefore whom you meet, should be treated with respect, although interest may dictate toward each different degrees of attention. It is disrespectful to the inviter to shun any of her guests. Those whom she has honoured by asking to her house, you should sanction, by admitting to your acquaintance.

If you meet any one whom you have never heard of before at the table of a gentleman, or in the drawing-room of a lady, you may converse with him or her with entire propriety. The form of "introductions" is nothing more than a statement by a mutual friend, that two persons are by rank and manners fit acquaintances for one another.

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All this may be presumed from the fact, that both meet at a respectable house.

Men of all sorts of occupations meet in society. As they go there to unbend their minds and escape from the fetters of business, you should never, at an evening party, speak to a man about his profession.

If, in paying a morning visit, you are not recognized when you enter, mention your name immediately. If you call to visit one member of the family, and you find others only in the parlour, introduce yourself to them. Much awkwardness may occur through defect of attention to this point.

If your visit is merely one of ceremony, do not wait too long; if the party is not at home, leave your card. This equally entitles you to a return visit as if you had found her at home.

Visits of ceremony, although made after noon, are called morning visits.

In ordinary visits, leave a single card; but if there be residing in the family a married daughter, an unmarried sister, a guest, or any person in a distinct situation from the mistress of the house, and you acquainted with them, *leave separate cards for each*. Some ladies fold down one corner of a card when they wish to denote that their visit is only to one member, and two, three, or even four corners, when it is to the same num-

ber of persons; but the custom is nearly obsolete.

If you accidentally forget the name of the person you are addressing, the easiest and most polite mode of discovering it, is without constraint to ask him his name, making some casual remark about the difficulty of remembering names, and your unfortunate aptitude to forget them.

When a lady visits you for the first time, her visits should be returned within three days, or at the latest within a week.

When you are invited to a party, you should call on the person from whom the invitation came, on the third or fourth day after the party has taken place. To leave your card, without inquiring if the lady is at home, is sufficient.

It is ill-bred to wear your veil over your face while paying a visit.

Visits of condolence are made the week after a death has occurred in the family you are visiting. If you are related to the afflicted persons, call immediately.

Visits of congratulation, after a marriage, birth, &c. should be made within a fortnight.

Farewell visits should be made only a few days before your departure from the city. It is only necessary to leave your card with P. P. C. (*Pour prendre congee*.)

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or P. D. A. (*Pour dire Adieu*.) written upon it.

Only two visits a year are due to persons with whom you are not very well acquainted.

If you do not wish to receive a visit, you run less risk of giving offence by desiring your servants to say that you are "*not at home*," than by sending word that you are *engaged*. The former form has been objected to on the plea that it was telling a falsehood, and teaching your servants to do the same. But it is easy to explain to a domestic that "*NOT AT HOME*" is understood as "*not at home to company*—not in the parlour to receive company;" and the mode of expression being generally understood in society, it cannot be accounted a falsehood.

To peep through the blinds of a window, or over the bannisters, when the street door bell rings, is decidedly vulgar.



CHAPTER VI.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

It is the custom in Paris, in New York, and in several other cities, both in Europe and America, for gentlemen to call upon the whole circle of their lady acquaintances on the first day of the year. The omission of this observance in regard to any particular family, would be considered a decided slight. Its influence on the social intercourse of families is very salutary; the first day of the year is considered a day of kindness and reconciliation, on which petty differences are forgotten, and trifling injuries forgiven. It sometimes happens, that between friends long connected, a misunderstanding takes place. Each is too proud to make concessions, alienation follows, and thus are two families, very probably, permanently estranged. But on this day of mutual amnesty, each of the offended parties calls on the wife of the other, kind feelings are recalled, past grievances are forgotten, and at their next meeting they take each other by the hand, and are again friends.

On New-Year's day, the ladies of the family are expected to be dressed at as early an hour as ten o'clock.

Cakes, wines, and liquors are spread upon a side table : this is all the refreshment that is absolutely necessary ; but sometimes a large table is spread with a handsome collation in the back parlour. It is not unusual to serve hot coffee.

The ladies of the family on this day invariably shake hands with their guests, and request them to help themselves to a glass of wine, or partake of the refreshments.

The visits paid are always short, and those who have a great number of visits to pay, merely leave their cards.

The street doors are all thrown open, so that visitors may not be delayed in gaining admission.

If a lady does not receive company, her door is, of course, closed, but she should station a servant near it to answer the bell on the instant, and receive the cards.

Ladies are expected to be in readiness throughout the first week of the new year, to receive those visits which were not paid on New-Year's Day.



CHAPTER VII.

BOWING AND OTHER SALUTATIONS.

It is bad taste to courtesy in the street, and in equally bad taste to bow stiffly. A slight bend of the body, at the same time that you incline the head, forms the most graceful and affable salutation.

A smile is natural on meeting a friend, and if it is necessary to bow coldly to an acquaintance, it is quite as well not to bow at all.

A gentleman should always lift his hat entirely from his head on saluting a lady—unless he does this, his salutation deserves no return.

Bows should be mutual and made at the same moment, but when they are unavoidably otherwise, the lady should bow first to the gentleman, as a token that she permits him to recognize her. If she does not do so, he is not at liberty to salute her, and runs the risk of finding his salutation unanswered.

Low courtesies are now entirely obsolete, unless you are courtesying to a very old lady—then, as a mark of respect, you may bend lower than usual.

On entering a ball-room, your courtesy to the lady of the house should be a little more marked than it is when you are making a morning visit.

When a lady is introduced to you, you may say, "I am very happy to make your acquaintance," but there are few cases where this remark can be addressed with propriety to a gentleman from a lady. It is always a favour for him to be presented to her, therefore the pleasure should be on his side.

"I am happy to see you," is a very usual expression on greeting a visitor.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROMENADING.

EVERY lady should study to carry herself gracefully, and practise walking in her chamber, that she may obtain a graceful gait. It has been said of the American women, that while they are the most beautiful in the world, their carriage is worse than that of any other nation.

Request the gentleman with whom you are walking to keep the step with you, and

do not walk with either gentleman or lady who has not learned to do this.

Two persons of dissimilar gaits, walking side by side, look particularly awkward.

An unmarried lady should not take the arm of an unmarried gentleman (unless at night, or when the pavement is slippery;) if she takes his arm, it is to be presumed that she is engaged to him.

A married lady may take the arm of her intimate friends of the other sex. Two ladies should not walk arm in arm unless one of them is much older than the other.

A lady should never take the arms of two gentlemen at the same time. In the evening two ladies may take the arms of one gentleman.

Gentlemen walk on the outside of the street, ladies always on the inside.

A gentleman may walk between two ladies, but it looks better to see him walking on the outside of the street.

Do not stop more than an instant in the street to converse with a friend; it is not polite to make those who are passing walk out of their way.



CHAPTER IX.

A LADY IN HER OWN HOUSE.

A LADY can never appear to as much advantage as when doing the honours of her own house. It is especially her province to entertain her guests, and she cannot entertain them without being courteous to all. *All* her guests for the time being are *equal*, and have an equal claim upon her attention; if any difference be shown, let it be towards those of lesser rank.

She should never enter her own house without bowing to any one she may meet there, and she should on no account find fault with either servants or children before strangers.

At an evening entertainment, no matter how large a number of guests may be assembled, she should pass quietly around the room and enter into conversation with every one present in turn. Her manners should be characterized by gentleness and suavity, and she should evince no over-anxiety to please, and no disquietude lest every thing should not go on smoothly.

It is the height of rudeness to press a per-

son to sing or play who refuses to do so. A lady has no right to force others to entertain her company. She should never take offence at any remark made by her guests—nor even make an answer, however witty, which might possibly wound.

In offering a favour, take care to do it so as not to offend the delicacy of the one to whom it is offered. Never press a favour after it has been refused.

Affectation is a deviation from, at the same time that it is an imitation of, nature. It is the effect of bad taste, and of mistaken notions of one's own qualities. The other vices have each a particular object, but affectation pervades and renders disagreeable the whole conduct and behaviour. Beauty itself loses its attraction when disfigured by affectation. Even to copy from the best models is wrong, because the imitation can never be so good as the original.

The eye of a mistress alone, can so regulate an establishment, that visitors may at all times be received; and though she should never make her household arrangements a subject of conversation, nothing that contributes to the comfort of her domestic circle is beneath her notice.

Lady Mary Wortley Montague observes, that "the most minute details of household economy, become elegant and refined,

when they are ennobled by sentiment ;"—and they are truly ennobled when we do them either from a sense of duty, or consideration for a parent, or love to a husband. "To furnish a room," continues this lady, "is no longer a common-place affair, shared with upholsterers and cabinet-makers ; it is decorating the place where I am to meet a friend or lover. To order dinner, is not merely arranging a meal with my cook, it is preparing refreshment for him whom I love. These necessary occupations, viewed in this light, by a person capable of strong attachment, are so many pleasures, and afford her far more delight than the fancies and shows which constitute the amusements of the world."

A well-ordered house has been fitly compared to a watch, all the wheels and springs of which are out of sight, and it is only known that they exist, and are in order, by the regularity with which their results are brought about.



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CHAPTER X.

DRESS.

A LADY receiving evening company in her own house, should be more plainly dressed than her guests.

It is not in Paris considered ill-bred to notice and admire the toilette of your neighbour—to remark the furniture—to examine the paintings about the room, or to look at the books; although in America, many persons who pretend to fashion, consider this exhibition and interest vulgar, and a mark that one is unaccustomed to luxuries.—This idea is evidently erroneous, and it is always gratifying to both men and women, to find that their dress, furniture, &c., meet your approval.

It is in bad taste for a lady to draw on her gloves when visitors enter, for it seems to say that their presence prevents her employing her hands.

Gloves should always be removed at dinner.

Mits are more appropriate than gloves to be worn in the house.

A lady may shake hands without removing her glove, but a gentleman should

never offer his gloved hand to one of the other sex.

The neglect of the outward appearance, indicates either a little mind, or a disregard of the opinion of your neighbours. One should always be neat and clean in person, and in dress, because this is an evidence of respectability. No lady who has any regard for herself, or any respect for the society in which she moves, will be slovenly in her appearance, or careless in her attire.

It is true, there is danger of being too particular; but every lady is entitled to follow her own taste as to dress, provided she dresses suitably—that is, according to her age, circumstances, and station in society.

The young of either sex, but particularly, the female, ought to regard their external deportment and appearance, as, to a certain extent, essential to character. To dress simply, and without ostentation, is a mark of modesty; and it will be sufficient to some ladies merely to hint, that too much finery often draws attention to features, which, in themselves, are, perhaps, not particularly attractive. But in endeavouring to avoid every thing like display, young ladies, especially, should be careful not to fall into the opposite extreme—that of prudery.—There is more sincerity, if there is less nicety, in the conduct of a really virtuous woman, than there is in that of a prude; and

some degree of freedom, so far from being incompatible with the strictest virtue, is one of its principal privileges.

If a lady is obliged to receive company *en deshabille*, it is a sign of her good breeding, if she appears perfectly at ease, and makes little or no apology for her appearance. A person who changes her manners with her garb, must be innately vulgar.

CHAPTER XI.

CONVERSATION.

THIS is a subject which requires the utmost tact and discretion. It consists, in a great measure, of vain compliments, the current rumors of the day, idle jests, superficial wit, scandal without end or purpose.—How few are able to sustain a serious conversation, or prolong a useful one!

Chit-chat, which is generally harmless, is always amusing; but every thing savouring of scandal, ought at all times to be sedulously avoided.

If you wish to secure attention, address yourself to the capacity of those to whom you speak, by not appearing to be more learned than they are; by which means

you may draw out their knowledge, which otherwise, they will keep to themselves.— It is common enough, to hear persons who have acquired a smattering of science, constantly using technical terms, but which they frequently misapply. The truly learned, make no such pretensions.

Politeness will teach you the tact of directing the conversation to such topics as you know to be agreeable, or in which you believe those in whose company you may be are most versant.

Good humour, when it is kept within bounds, is the charm of conversation, which is always the better for a little seasoning of wit. But, as has been remarked, wit without wisdom is a dangerous weapon. To take upon you to furnish mirth for the whole company is not only undignified, but you will find it a most arduous task. A professed wit, though his company may be courted, can never himself be esteemed.

It is not contrary to good breeding to laugh in company, and even to laugh heartily, when there is anything amusing going on; this is nothing more than being sociable. To remain prim and precise on such an occasion is sheer affectation.

In conversation, you will find it the best way not to be ambitious of saying smart things. Every one, however, is now more

brilliant than his neighbour, and one is almost forced to be witty in self-defence.

There is nothing more annoying than interruption, except perhaps contradiction.—The person who is speaking to you, whoever it may be, or on whatever topic, except a personally insulting one,—for that admits of no license,—is entitled to a patient hearing; and, when a question is asked, courtesy requires that a reply of some kind or other should be immediately given.

Contradiction is the greatest rudeness any one can be guilty of, and many persons will not brook it, for it creates a sort of revulsion in the feelings which it is sometimes difficult to control.

Argument, as usually managed, (says Swift,) is the worst sort of conversation.—Sir Walter Scott is said to have so regulated the conversation at his table, that whenever it approached towards an argument between two of the party, by imperceptible but sure means, he contrived to check their monopoly, and turn the conversation into channels of more general interest.

The great business in company is conversation. It should be studied as an art.—Style in conversation is as important, and as capable of cultivation, as style in writing.—The manner of saying things is what gives them their value.

The most important requisite for succeeding here, is constant and unfaltering attention. That which Churchill has noted as the greatest virtue on the stage, is also the most necessary in company,—to be “always attentive to the business of the scene.”—Your understanding should, like your person, be armed at all points. Never go into society with your mind *en deshabille*. It is fatal to success to be at all absent or *distract*. The secret of conversation has been said to consist in building upon the remark of your companion. Men of the strongest minds, who have solitary habits and bookish dispositions, rarely excel in sprightly colloquy, because they seize upon the *thing* itself,—the subject abstractly,—instead of attending to the *language* of other speakers, and do not cultivate *verbal* pleasantries and refinements. He who does otherwise gains a reputation for quickness, and pleases by showing that he has regarded the observation of others.

It is an error to suppose that conversation consists in talking. A more important thing is to listen discreetly. Mirabeau said, “that to succeed in the world, it is necessary to submit to be taught many things which you understand, by persons who know nothing about them.” Flattery is the smoothest path to success; and the most refined and

gratifying compliment you can pay, is to listen. La Bruyère says, "the wit of conversation consists more in finding it in others, than in showing a great deal yourself; he who goes from your conversation pleased with himself and his own wit, is perfectly well pleased with you. Most men had rather please than admire you, and seek less to be instructed,—nay, delighted,—than to be approved and applauded. The most delicate pleasure is to please another."

Patience is a social engine, as well as a Christian virtue. To listen, to wait, and to be wearied, are the certain elements of good fortune.

If there be any foreigner present at a dinner party, or small evening party, who does not understand the language which is spoken, good breeding requires that the conversation should be carried on, as far as possible, entirely in his language. Even among your most intimate friends, never address any one in a language not understood by all the others. It is as bad as whispering.

If upon the entrance of a visitor you continue a conversation begun before, you should always explain the subject to the new-comer.

It is sometimes flattery to accept praises.

It is an error to imagine that men are less intoxicated with flattery than women.

The only difference is, that esteem must be expressed to women, but proved to men.

Never attempt to take the lead in conversation: if you are entitled to it, you will soon get it without striving after it, and it will be more graciously acknowledged by your so doing.

Few things are more agreeable or more difficult, than to relate anecdotes with entire propriety. They should be introduced gracefully, have fit connection with the previous remarks, and be in perfect keeping with the company, the subject, and the tone of conversation; they should be short, witty, and eloquent, and they should be new, but not far-fetched.

In rapid and eager discourse, when persons are excited and impatient, repeat nothing but the spirit and soul of a story, leaping over the particulars. There are, however, many places and occasions in which you may bring out the details with advantage, precisely, but not tediously. When you repeat a true story, be always extremely exact.

Never talk *at* people; but if you must tell your opinion, talk *to* them at once.

Do not repeat the name of the individual to whom you are talking, and never address any one with the term Mr., or Mr. P., un-

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It is allowable in some cases to conceal our sentiments ; but we ought never to do so for the purpose of deceiving others. Make it a rule never to give utterance to a falsehood : in all circumstances, and whatever be the consequence, adhere to truth. To be detected in any subterfuge, is to subject yourself to continual suspicion ; for no credit can ever be given to one who has once been convicted of an untruth. Though neither truth nor sincerity oblige us to speak what we think in all cases, we should in no case say what we do not think.

Avoid the habit of employing French words in conversation. In general society, never quote from any author unless in English.

It is not considered good taste for a lady to say "yes, *Sir*," and "no, *Sir*," to a gentleman, or frequently to introduce the word *Sir* at the end of her sentences, unless she desires to be exceedingly reserved towards the person with whom she is conversing.

The voice of a woman should be well modulated, and she cannot take too much pains in learning the true pronunciations of the words she uses, whether English or foreign. She should by all means avoid an affected tone of voice—neither speaking too

loud nor yet too low. The former may bring on her the accusation of rudeness ; the latter subject her to the charge of whispering—which is at all times an invidious thing.

In conversation avoid such phrases as “My *dear* sir, or madam,” unless they are addressed to persons with whom you are very intimate.

The desire of pleasing is, of course, the basis of social conversation. Those who enter society with the intention of producing an effect, and of being distinguished, however clever they may be, are never agreeable. They are always tiresome, and often ridiculous.

A recent writer on etiquette has said that “the whims and caprices of women in society should, of course, be tolerated by men, who, themselves, require toleration for greater inconveniences. But this must not be carried too far. There are certain limits to empire which, if they themselves forget, should be pointed out to them with delicacy and politeness. You should be the slave of the ladies, but not of their fancies.” A lady should therefore be very careful not to make an unreasonable request of her warmest admirer, for he may lose his esteem for her while he is obeying her caprices.

Every woman should pay due deference to the aged, and especially in her own

house devote herself to the entertainment of those advanced in years. The old are generally complimented by the attentions of the young, and the latter will not find it difficult to render their conversation agreeable to their seniors.

CHAPTER XII.

CORRESPONDENCE.

In writing a letter to a gentleman with whom you are not very intimate, commence by writing his name, and beneath it a little in advance, "My Dear Sir," or "Sir."

Remember that the terms of compliment at the close of a letter—"Yours very respectfully, &c.," are merely forms *signifying nothing*. Do not therefore avoid them because you dislike the person addressed. A lady's letter should always be enclosed in an envelope, unless it is going to some distance, and the postage would be increased by the extra sheet.

In writing to a lady put the name of the lady addressed at the bottom of the letter, towards the left hand corner.

Ladies are sometimes obliged to write business letters, and they should remember that in these, as well as in other epistles, politeness should not be altogether overlooked ; courtesy never loses anything, but on the contrary is always a gainer. A business letter should be answered as soon as possible. It is a gross breach of etiquette if you permit the letter of a friend to remain longer than a fortnight unanswered.

All notes should be enclosed in envelopes.

Business letters should be written on plain paper.

The most appropriate ornament for either letter or note paper is a stamp of the crest or initials of the writer.

Wafers are of course never used ; a large seal to a lady's letter is in bad taste.

In letters, not on business, to gentlemen, always place the date at the end of the letter.

It is considered a mark of respect to commence a letter towards the middle of the page. The lower towards the middle it is commenced the greater is the deference expressed. Between friends this custom would, of course, be absurd.

Figured and coloured paper may be used by ladies, but pure white paper, with gilt edges, is more strictly in good taste.

CHAPTER XIII.

RECEIVING AND ACKNOWLEDGING PRESENTS.

AMONG friends, presents ought to be made of things of small value; or, if valuable, their worth should be derived from the style of the workmanship, or from some accidental circumstance, rather than from the inherent and solid richness. Especially, never offer to a lady a gift of great cost: it is in the highest degree indelicate, and looks as if you were desirous of placing her under an obligation to you, and of buying her good will. The gifts made by ladies to gentlemen must be of the most refined nature possible: they should be little articles not purchased, but deriving a priceless value as being the offspring of their gentle skill; a little picture from their pencil, or a trifle from their needle.

If you make a present, and it is praised by the receiver, you should not yourself commence undervaluing it. If one is offered to you, always accept it, and however small it may be, receive it with civil and expressed thanks, without any kind of affectation. You sometimes confer a greater favour in receiving a present than in presenting one.

Avoid all such deprecatory phrases, as "I fear I rob you," &c.

When a lady receives a present from a lady, it should always be immediately acknowledged by a note or a visit.

If the present is from a married or elderly gentleman, it should be likewise acknowledged by a note ; but if from a young gentleman, it will be time enough to express your indebtedness when he calls upon you.

It is difficult and generally rude for a lady to refuse a present. Should the gift be sent by a gentleman, there are circumstances under which she may be forced to do so, and she should then, without delay, write him a polite note returning his present.

All New-Year's gifts, be the givers who they may, are accepted by the well bred.

To acknowledge a present by immediately sending another, is an obsolete custom, which says very pointedly, "I do not choose to be under obligations to you." If the receiver of a gift wishes to return the compliment, she should first permit a month to elapse.



CHAPTER XIV.

PUNCTUALITY.

IN every requirement of life, punctuality is indispensable. In business, it is so necessary that it has become a proverb. To insure your own comfort and respectability, it is essentially requisite that you should in all things be punctual. In correspondence, particularly, it ought to be the invariable rule. Besides the embarrassment and confusion which arise from the accumulation of unanswered letters, there is a danger of loss of friends by neglecting to acknowledge their communications till it is too late. This would easily be prevented by following the Duke of Wellington's plan, and answering every letter, no matter on what subject, if it requires an answer, as soon as you can after receiving it.

There is one species of punctuality which is most essential to comfort—and that is, as regards a dinner invitation. Some people think that, by arriving a little *before*, or precisely *at* the hour appointed, they will be considered as having come too soon, while the not coming till a little beyond it adds to their importance. But this is a mis-

taken idea. In genteel society no family waits beyond the hour fixed; and if you should arrive after the company have taken their places, you will be received for form's sake, with as much courtesy as the rest, but you will be deemed by all present ignorant of what is right.

Punctuality as to time is very important. In making an appointment with any one, you are bound, both in honour and duty, to keep it exactly at the hour; for, however much you may be disposed to squander away your own time, you have no right to waste that of another, which may be pressing and valuable.

CHAPTER XV.

SERVANTS.

Few ladies are aware how frequently their own conduct is judged by that of their servants. No lady should tolerate ill-manners, or sullen domestics, and most especially, if they evince the slightest absence of respect to visitors.

For a lady to reprove a servant before

her guests, is unpardonable ; for she not only evinces little consideration for the feelings of the domestic, but she makes her guests feel unpleasantly.

When she is receiving company, the duties of her domestics should previously be so explicitly explained to them, that they are not obliged to address her, or receive even a signal from her. If, through some omission, this has been forgotten, or her orders are not obeyed, she should quietly call the servant to her, and express her wishes in a subdued tone, but without whispering ; passing the matter over as lightly as possible. If she whispers, it is evident that she is not at ease.

The demeanour of a lady towards a servant, whether in company or in private, should be mild. By showing her domestics consideration, she teaches them to be considerate in return. She should take an interest in them, and their affairs, giving them counsel when they need it, but strictly avoiding all familiarity.

Every lady should insist upon her servants answering the street door bell, as well as any other bell, the instant they are rung. If persons are forced to ring twice, they can not but feel that the house at which they are visiting, is not well regulated.

CHAPTER XVI.

ETIQUETTE OF THE DINNER TABLE.

To perform faultlessly the honours of the table, is one of the most difficult duties imposed by society.

The lady of the house, to make her friends feel at ease, should express no anxiety, and mention no disappointment to them.

When the servant announces that dinner is served, every gentleman conducts a lady to the dining room. If the company merely pass from one room to another, he gives the lady his right hand; if they descend a stair, he gives her the wall.

The lady of the house should be led to the dining room by the principal person present, or the person in whose honour the dinner is given.

She should enter the dining room first, and take her station at the head of the table; for if she enters it last, as was formerly the custom, she finds some difficulty in assigning seats to her guests, which it is her duty to do, if there are ladies amongst the company.

The gentleman of the house, should always enter last.

The ladies take their seats immediately, but the gentlemen remain standing, until every lady present is seated.

The conversation of the dinner table should be very general.

Napkins, and finger glasses, are essential in all refined society.

When the party is large, it is customary for the table to be beautifully spread with the dessert, and decked with flowers: the viands are then carved by servants at side tables. When this is the case, the cloth is not removed.

Too great a display of plate, or too dazzling a show of chrystal, unless upon some particular occasion, is in bad taste. Simplicity is the soul of good-breeding, as it is the essence of natural beauty; and to put your visitor on a footing with yourself, is the best compliment you can pay him.—When you see company, therefore, let the table be set out tastefully, but not ostentatiously;—in a manner suitable to your station, but not, as it were, to exhibit your pride and wealth, more than your hospitality and social feeling.

At a party, never take soup or fish twice: at a family dinner, this is not of consequence.

Never refuse taking wine on being asked: you are not bound to do more than sip your glass.

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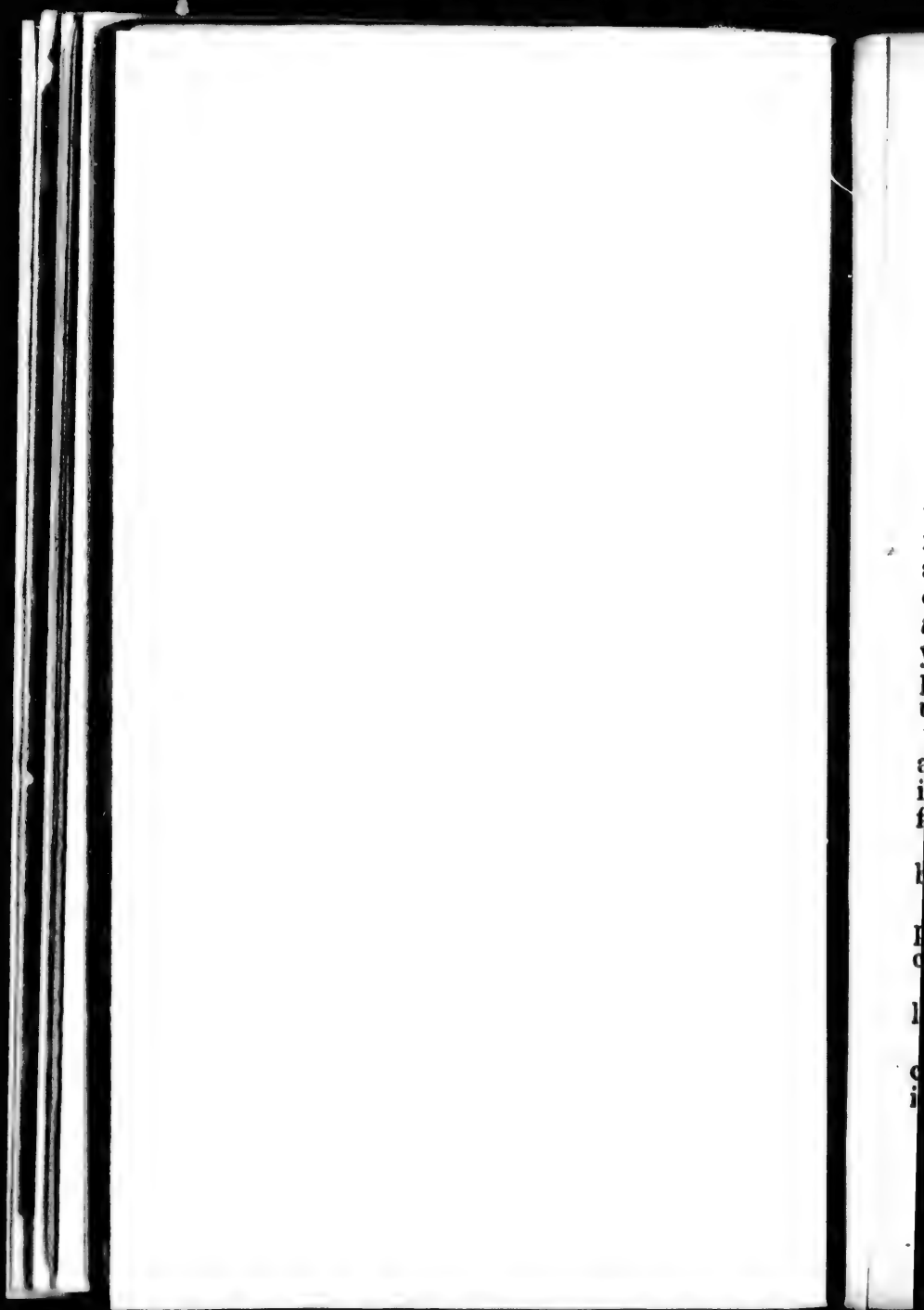
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Never load the plate of any one ; and in helping sauce, do not cover the meat or vegetables, but put it on one side of the plate. Never put more than one spoonful of soup into a plate.

Take care that the bread be cut in a cube form, not in slices, but in pieces of about an inch and a half thick.

Knives were made for cutting, and those who carry food to their mouths with them, frequently cut their lips. Eat always with a fork or a spoon—unless, indeed, in those old fashioned houses, where there are only *two*-pronged forks, you are obliged to use your knife. No one, however, who gives parties, omits to have broad silver forks. In using your fork, hold it in your right hand.

As knives spoil the delicacy of fish, and are apt to be corroded with the sauce, fish is generally eaten with the assistance of a fork and a piece of bread.

Peas, curry, tarts, and pudding, should be eaten with a spoon rather than a fork.

In helping any one at table, it is not proper to use a knife and fork, if a spoon can be as conveniently substituted.

In supping, eating, and drinking, make as little noise as possible.

Never press people to eat more than they choose : never press any particular dish ; it is sufficient to recommend it.

Never send away your own plate until all your guests have done so.

Ladies should never have gloves on at dinner; servants should never want them; above all, take care that your servants' gloves be clean and white.

If a plate be sent to you, at dinner, by the master or mistress of the house, you should always take it, without offering it to all your neighbours, as was in olden times considered necessary. The spirit of antique manners, consisted in exhibiting an attention to ceremony; the spirit of modern manners, consists in avoiding all possible appearance of form.

When you are helped to any thing at a dinner table, do not wait with your plate untouched, until others have begun to eat.— This stiff piece of mannerism, is often occurring in the country, and indeed, among all persons who are not thoroughly bred.— As soon as your plate is placed before you, you should take up your knife, and arrange the table furniture around you, if you do not actually eat.

Among choice cuts, and delicacies, be it remembered in carving, are the sounds of cod-fish, the thin or fat of salmon, the thick and fins of turbot, the fat of venison, lamb, and veal kidney; the pope's eye of a leg of mutton, the ribs and neck of a pig; the

breast and wings of a fowl; the legs and back of a hare, and the ears, which are of great delicacy; the breast and thighs, (without the drumsticks,) of turkey and goose; the legs and breast of ducks; and the wings and breast of game generally, although the back is highly relished.

Fish should be helped in handsome slices. Salmon and all short grained fish, should be cut lengthwise, and not across.

Although handsome slices are admired in carving poultry, for a *large* party, it is better to cut slices from side to side, than to leave so much on the wings.

The prime parts of a partridge are the breast and wings, the tips of the latter being exquisite delicacies.

In helping a pigeon pie, if the birds be not previously divided, take them out separately on a plate, and cut each asunder.

The fairest mode of cutting a ham, so as to eat fat and lean evenly, is to begin at a hole in the centre of the thickest part, and cut from it thin circular slices; by this means also, the moisture and flavor of the ham are best preserved.

If you are complimented on the excellence of your dishes, or the choiceness of your wines, receive such praise with a modest acknowledgment, and with no affected airs.

When your friends come to see you uninvited, do the best you can to entertain them, but make no comment or apology; for that always sounds to your guests like a reproach for taking you unawares.

The greatest hospitality is generally to be found among persons of small income; who are content to live according to their means, and never give any great dinners; for nothing can be further from true hospitality, than the spirit in which such entertainments are usually given.

There are two stingy practices which deserve reprobation; first, having the dining-room fire lighted only just before dinner, so that when the company enter, the room is not warmed; secondly, letting the fire go out in cold weather, before the guests.

It is customary for the ladies to retire a short time after they have partaken of the dessert. The lady of the house ought to make use of considerable tact, in choosing the right moment to withdraw, taking care not to interrupt the conversation of her guests. There are always occasional pauses which occur, and of one of these she must avail herself. She should catch the eye of the lady nearest her on her right, and, if possible, on her left also, and slightly inclining her head, rise without haste.—The ladies follow her from the apartment,

and all the gentlemen rise from their seats, and do not resume them until the last lady has retired.

Coffee is served in the drawing room, a couple of hours after the ladies leave the table.

Most of the gentlemen either join them then or before, but there are generally a few who prefer to remain at the table.

At small parties, the gentlemen leave the table at the same time with the ladies, and coffee is served more promptly.

There is one practice, to which, in general, literary and studious men are addicted, upon which a remark may not be thrown away;—that is, seizing upon a book and reading, when the person so offending ought to be in conversation with the lady or gentleman seated beside him. It is a sure mark of the want of knowledge of the world, to be guilty of such a practice; it exhibits, also, an undeniable preference of the book to the company, for which, the person who shows himself so devoid of good breeding, is either unsuited, or he is desirous of arrogating to himself a privilege allowed to none—namely, the privilege of being rude.

CHAPTER XVII.

ETIQUETTE OF THE BALL ROOM.

THE Ball-Room should be an assemblage of elegance, beauty, good humour, and vivacity, united with the utmost purity and propriety of conduct. The absence of some of these indispensable requisites from our public assemblies, has in the minds of many persons created a prejudice against the art of dancing, which, abstractedly, it by no means merits. There is, no doubt, some considerable difference between the etiquette of a public and a private ball-room, but they are essentially the same. The chief difference is in the freedom of intercourse which is allowable between partners. Every one will see that in a select company, where each is, to some extent, personally known, and the fact of their invitation a guarantee for their respectability, a much greater degree of intimacy between parties is to be tolerated than would be at all proper in a public, and consequently promiscuous assembly.

In one case, an invitation given should never, if possible, be refused; that is, when a lady requests the company of a gentleman

—with whom she has no personal acquaintance—to a ball, through the medium of a third person; this is stepping beyond the prescribed rules of politeness, in order to shew a special mark of civility; and the least return the person so honoured can make, is to accept the proffered kindness.

The master of the ceremonies is a personage of much importance, as on him, to a vast extent, depends whether the entertainment shall become a scene of refined delight, or an unmeaning combination of "wearisome nothingness." He should be a real professor of the art, united with the feelings and the manners of a gentleman. And as he knows himself, in his official station, to be by common consent, constituted a recognised dictator, from whose decision there is no appeal, he should be especially careful never to assume a tone or manner, so peremptory, as to appear to be conscious of his unlimited and unchallenged power. It is his especial duty to see that all the arrangements are so made as to produce the most agreeable sensations in the minds of all; while nothing should be omitted that is likely to contribute to the individual pleasures of each.

No gentleman should venture to enter a ball-room who has not *learnt* to dance; and in all other respects, so to conduct himself,

as to impress the idea of feeling himself perfectly at home. It has been remarked, with some severity, but with much truth, by the Abbè Meunier, that "A young man who cannot dance, should go to battle and lose a leg, with all possible expedition, as he will then have a palpable excuse for his awkwardness." And the bitter satire of Lord Chesterfield, upon a self-conceited specimen of masculine humanity, conducting himself so as to insure the contempt of any well regulated assembly into which he might intrude, is so well known, that it is needless to quote it here. Nothing is more preposterous than for a man whose station in society gives him a right of entry among the polished and the gay, venturing to claim the privilege, without having duly qualified himself, by a due attention to those rules, to which he is expected to conform.

The following rules, in reference to the conduct of both ladies and gentlemen, should be carefully attended to.

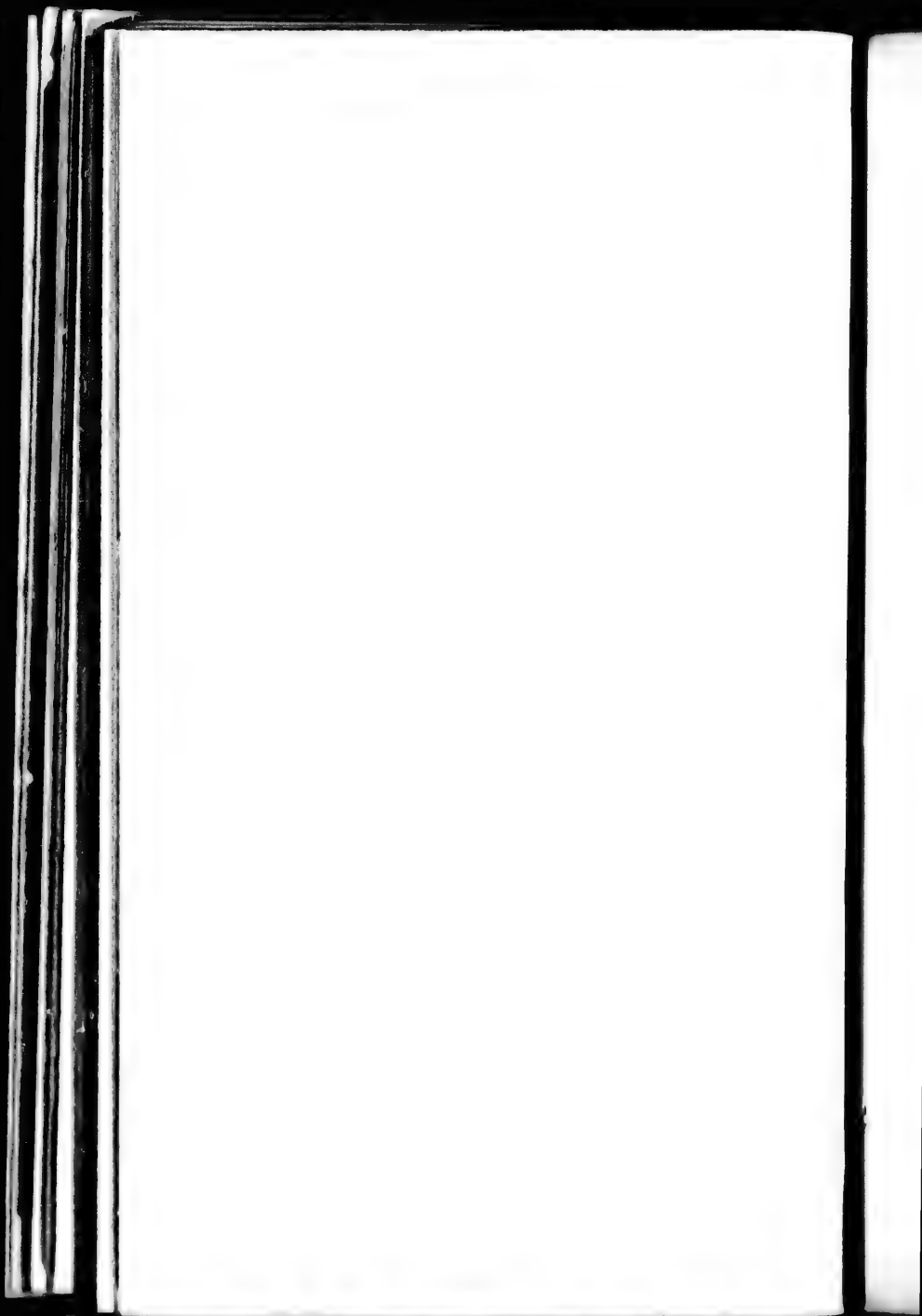
GENTLEMEN.

No gentleman should attempt to dance who has not a competent acquaintance with the figures. If he does, he will cause to the lady, who is unfortunate enough to become his partner, much and serious inconveni-

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ence. The figures in general are very simple and can be easily learned. We say nothing here as to the steps. But if a gentleman is not possessed of an excellent figure, and great ease of motion, so as to display it to advantage, he should avoid every ambitious attempt at display. Let him *walk* through the Quadrille, or perform his part in a gliding and graceful manner, rather than distress his partner and make himself ridiculous, by "going with pious scrupulosity, through the one, two, three, of a balancez, and shaking a vast frame in a manner to fill the by-standers with a reasonable dread lest it should fall to pieces."

If a gentleman solicits the honor of dancing with a lady, and is told she is engaged, it displays a want of good manners to solicit her for the next set, as for that and several others she may be engaged. The polite course is to beg her to be so condescending as to name when she will be disengaged, and wait her pleasure.

Ease of manner, perfectly free from constraint, but entirely removed from either affectation or effrontery, is an essential requisite in a gentleman. Indeed, if he cannot be as easy in a ball room as in his own domicile, he had better never quit the latter. He must never forget, that the ability to dance well, does not of necessity, constitute

him a gentleman, and that good sense and an obliging disposition are essential to the real possession of that estimable character.

While standing up to dance, you are allowed to converse, *sotto voce*, with your own partner, but only occasionally with any other lady. You must also recollect that in return for the honour done you, you are bound to shew to your partner the utmost polite attention. While engaged to dance with her, it would be a piece of unpardonable rudeness to quit her side. You must either sit or stand by her until your temporary engagement is dissolved. It seems now to be deemed *hors de règle* to dance more than four sets with a lady, even should she be of your own party. Nor should any lady be engaged to dance beyond the fourth set she may happen to have on her list. To do so would seem a species of presumption, which every well-educated gentleman would avoid.

Some men, gentlemen they call themselves, think it a mark of their gentility, to act the *grimacier*, when dancing. No character can be more disgusting. They only insure for themselves the contempt of every right-thinking person in the room.

Dress is a matter of first-rate importance in a ball-room. It is reckoned the most genteel for gentlemen to appear in black

coats well fitted, and of the newest fashion. A white silk roll-collared vest, linen of surpassing whiteness, frilled, and with wristbands of point lace, made according to the prevailing fashion. If his figure is well made, the gentleman should wear black tights, or trowsers half tight, and made to look as neat as possible. Black silk stockings, and stock with a neat bow, a handkerchief of fine cambric, with a plain border, and slightly perfumed, and gloves of lemon color, or white kid, completes the attire. A gold guard chain, *brequet en reste*, slight chain and seal, may be worn at pleasure. The *chaussure* must be of patent leather, beautifully neat, and the tie a small bow,—a large one is vulgar in the extreme. To complete the costume of the gentleman, his hair must be exceedingly well dressed. This gives the finish to his whole appearance.

In closing our instructions to gentlemen, we must remind them, that when the hour for taking refreshment arrives, they have an important duty to perform. Each then selects a lady, and solicits the honour of leading her to the refreshment table; where he is to remain with her, and to see that she is supplied with every thing she desires. He then conducts her back to the dancing room.

LADIES.

WE now proceed to point out to the fair ones, who add brilliancy and grace to every assembly which is honoured by their presence, such rules as it is necessary for them to observe, in order to give effect to those entertainments, of which they are at once the soul and ornament.

First, then, let our fair readers remember, that in order to enjoy, they must ever do all in their power to secure the happiness and enjoyment of others. It is always advisable, in frequenting public balls, to make up a party of your own ; but this must not engender a spirit of exclusiveness. You expect the whole assembly in some way to contribute to your enjoyment, and your conduct and manners must be such, as to add something to the general harmony. To this desirable end, good nature and propriety of conduct are especially conducive. All affectation should be studiously avoided, and all that frowning and pouting sullenness, which so much disfigures the face of beauty. This kind of conduct will not only destroy your own pleasure, but will cause you to be "*marked*;" whereas, it has been well observed, "it should be the grand object of your life, whether in public or in private, to

pass along noiselessly and beloved, and leave only the impress of fairy footsteps." Of one thing we warn you to be especially careful. Pain not the heart of a lover by any unjustifiable preference for a new acquaintance, whom you may meet in a ball room. It is the height of folly, and evinces either a weak, or a vicious heart, to excite the feelings of jealousy, and to delight in the power we possess of giving pain, or planting a thorn in that bosom which has reposed its happiness in our keeping. The deliberate coquette is one of the most contemptible objects in creation.

Some young ladies seem to court distinction by staring modest people out of countenance, or by the loudness of their merriment; this shews a lamentable want of good sense, and should be carefully avoided.

It is the acknowledged privilege of a lady to command the unlimited and undivided attention of her partner, but no one who feels correctly, will so use this power, as to make that a task which should be a source of pleasure and delight. An excellent writer has observed, "a man who bestows his attentions on a woman, deserves in return, her most grateful acknowledgments. He has chosen her from among many, and can there be a more delicate flattery. Let her, therefore, be invariably kind in her demeanor,

and above all things, shun the temptation to coquet. Half the old maids in these realms might appropriately write that little word on their escutcheons."

In reference to dress, much must be left to individual taste and judgment. But however rich the materials may be, let the style be simple and elegant, and such as will accord well with the complexion and the figure it is intended to adorn. The hair should be well dressed, but with as little artificial adorning as possible. Of this part of the female form, it may with truth be said,

"When unadorned, it is adorned the most."

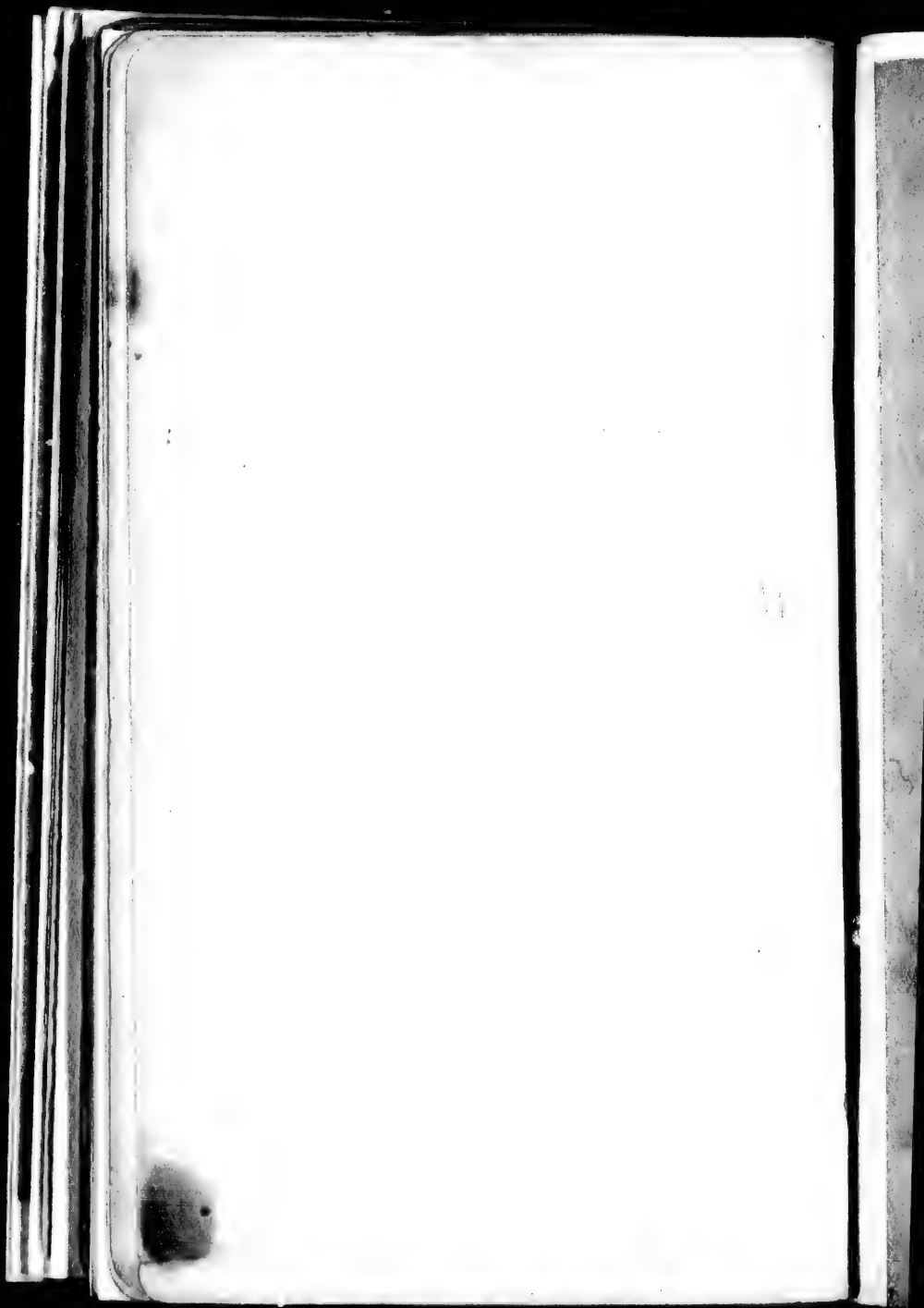
It would be ridiculous to prescribe what might be called a ball room costume, since fashion is ever varying; but we may remark, that the handkerchief should be "fine as a snowy cobweb," and perfumed, just sufficiently to render it agreeable. Your gloves should be of white kid, your shoes small, fitting with the nicest exactness. These should be perfect in their kind.

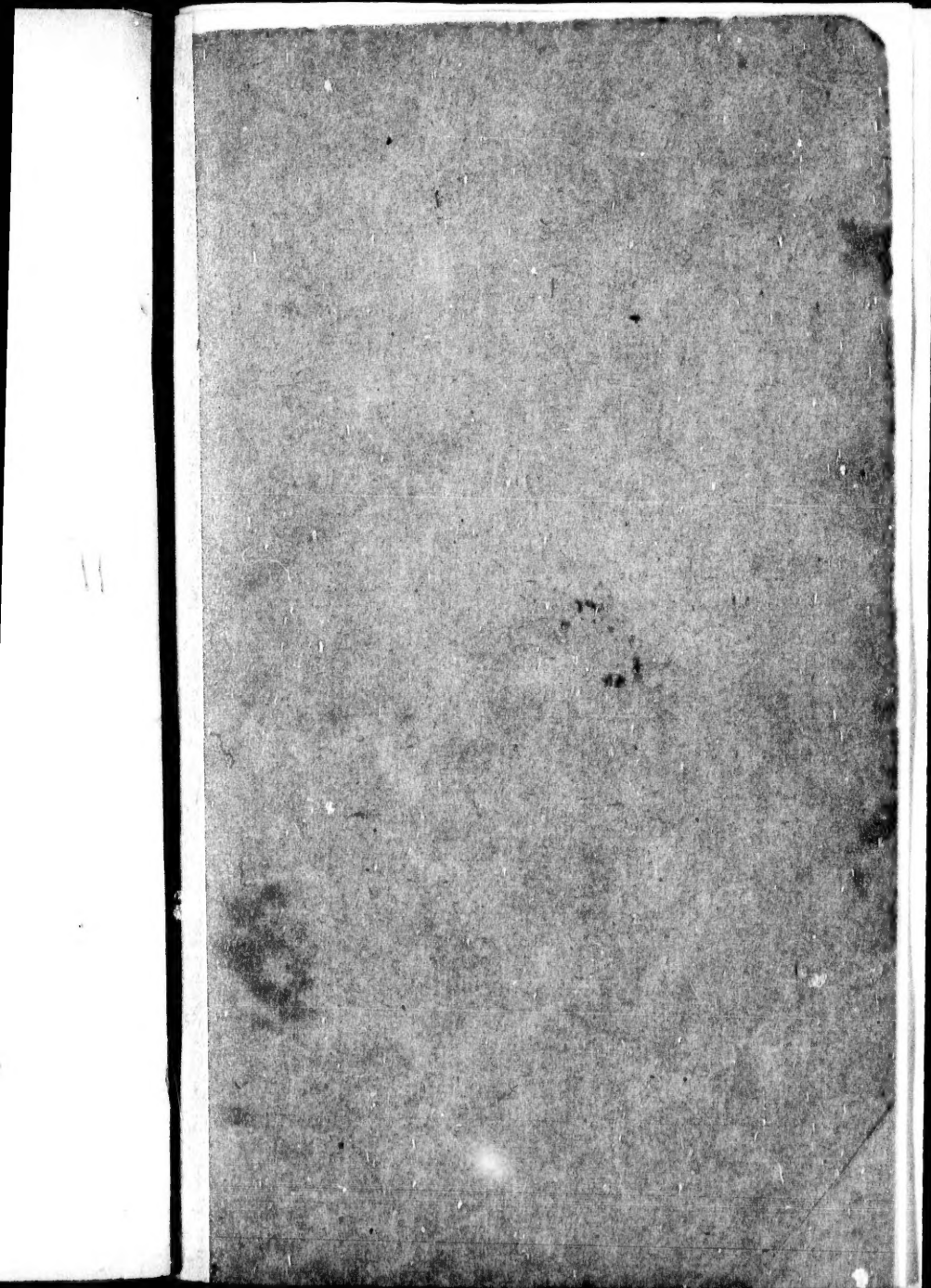
In conclusion, we would remark, that both ladies and gentlemen should draw on their gloves in the dressing room, and never be for one moment without them in the ball room. At the time of taking refreshment, of course, they must be taken off. No well-educated person would eat in gloves.

You should never go to a public ball until a late hour. In going to private balls attention must be paid to the habits of the inviter. Some persons would be surprised to see their guests before eleven o'clock, while others would be equally annoyed if they did not arrive by seven or eight.

END.







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